UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO: Mr. Mohr

DATE: June 4, 1964

FROM: C. D. DeLoach

SUBJECT: WILLIAM MANCHESTER
AUTHOR OF KENNEDY BOOK TO BE PUBLISHED IN 1969
APPOINTMENT WITH DIRECTOR, 10:10 A.M., 6-4-64

By appointment, I introduced William Manchester, who has been commissioned by Mrs. John F. Kennedy to write a book concerning the four days surrounding the assassination and funeral of the late President, to the Director at 10:10 a.m., today in the Director's Office.

Mr. Manchester first thanked the Director for seeing him. He explained that he had already seen approximately 90 people, principally in Washington; however, had not yet gone to Dallas, Texas, inasmuch as Chief Justice Warren felt that he should not conduct interviews in Dallas until after the Warren Commission report had been issued.

In instituting a series of questions to the Director, Mr. Manchester first inquired as to what the Director was doing on November 22, 23, 24 and 25, 1963. Manchester added that he would first like to start with November 22, 1963, at the precise moment the Director first received the news that the President had been shot. The Director replied that he had just returned from lunch. This was approximately 1:10 p.m. A news item was brought in to him reflecting the President had been shot. The Director immediately called the Attorney General who was at his home dining with the U. S. Attorney from New York, Mr. Morgenthau. The Director advised the Attorney General that a news announcement had been made that the President had been wounded. The Director stated he next talked to the SAC of our Office in Dallas, Texas. He was informed that the President had been wounded and had been taken to the Parkland Memorial Hospital. The SAC also advised that Governor Connally had been shot and was now in the emergency room with Kennedy at the same hospital. Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Connally, who were riding in the same car, had not been hit. The SAC told the Director that it appeared that the shots had come from an upper story window of the Texas Book Depository Building.

Enclosure

- Miss Gandy
- Miss Holmes
- Mr. Belmont
- Mr. Sullivan
- Mr. Jones
- Mr. Morrell

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ENCLOSURE

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The Dallas Office additionally advised the Director shortly after 2:00 p.m. that day that the President had died. The Director immediately called the Attorney General once again and told him of the death of his brother. At this time the Director inquired as to whether the Attorney General planned to go to Dallas. The Director stated that he had advised the Attorney General that if such plans were in the making he would facilitate his departure and arrival. The Director told Manchester that shortly thereafter our Dallas Office called once again to indicate that the President's body would be immediately flown back to Washington and that the Vice President had already been sworn in as President. The Director later called the Attorney General once again and told him that the FBI was moving into the investigation. The Director advised Manchester that the FBI took this action despite the fact that there was no law making it a Federal violation to assassinate the President.

At this point the Director gave Manchester a brief history of the assassination of SAC Shanahan in Chicago, Illinois, in the middle 1920's. There was no Federal law against assaulting or murdering an FBI Agent at that time. The Director told Manchester he initiated action to make it a Federal crime to assault or kill an FBI Agent so that proper action could be taken in Federal court rather than a local court in such matters.

The Director told Manchester that if the FBI had taken custody of Lee Harvey Oswald, Jr., Oswald would never have been killed by Jack Ruby. The Director stated that the murder of Oswald by Ruby naturally gave rise to considerable speculation and rumor. All of this could have been avoided had the Dallas police taken proper action to protect Oswald.

The Director told Manchester that the FBI immediately entered the case, despite non-jurisdiction, and that we interviewed Oswald as soon as he was made available. The Director stated that on the evening of November 22, 1963, at approximately 7:25 p.m. President Johnson called him at his home and requested that the FBI take complete charge of the case involving the assassination. The Director stated he advised the President that the FBI had already entered the case and that we would, of course, go all out in this matter. The Director also told the President that he was concerned about the great amount of publicity coming out of Dallas.

The Director then told Manchester that the Dallas police had given out considerable information received as a result of FBI findings, particularly from our Laboratory. He added that on the 4th or 5th day following the assassination he instructed our SAC in Dallas to contact Chief of Police Curry and order him to make no further statements to the press with respect to the evidence or investigation surrounding the assassination. The Director told Manchester that this Chief of Police could have told

him to go to hell; however, he had recognized the obvious necessity and logic of such instructions and had complied. The Director explained to Manchester at some length the necessity to keep physical evidence confined prior to the prosecution of an individual.

The Director told Manchester that on Saturday evening, November 23, 1963, our Dallas Office had received an anonymous telephone call indicating that plans had been made to murder Oswald when he was removed from the Dallas City Jail. The FBI informed the Dallas Chief of Police immediately. The Director told Manchester that original plans for removal of Oswald had been made for 10:00 p.m. that Saturday night. The Chief of Police, however, changed these plans by acceding to the pressure of the press that Oswald be removed at a convenient time so that communications media could cover the event. Our Dallas Office again called the Dallas Police Department on Sunday morning, November 24, 1963, and reminded that Department of the same anonymous telephone call. At that time the Chief of Police assured our Dallas Office that all precautions were being taken to protect Oswald.

The Director informed Manchester that following the President's call at 7:25 p.m., November 22, 1963, he gave specific instructions that the FBI do everything possible to thoroughly investigate this case. The Director stated that additional personnel were immediately sent to Dallas. He told Manchester this was necessary inasmuch as our Dallas Office and FBI Headquarters, as well as other offices, received hundreds and hundreds of phone calls, telegrams and letters setting forth leads in this case.

Manchester inquired as to whether the Director placed any significance to the anonymous phone call concerning the plan to murder Oswald. The Director replied that we had no way of knowing at the time whether any importance should be attached or not; however, we did have the responsibility to immediately notify the Dallas police, which we did.

The Director characterized Jack Ruby as somewhat of a "police buff." As a result of his friendship with a number of police officers he had easy accessibility to the Dallas Police Department. The Director stated that he did not know whether Ruby's reported insanity was of the sincere or faked type inasmuch as we were not psychiatrists. He stated that Ruby had given the excuse that he had killed Oswald because of his obvious affection for the late President and the fact that he wanted to prevent any further sorrow to Mrs. Kennedy inasmuch as she would necessarily have to return to Dallas and testify against Oswald.

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Manchester inquired as to the exact location of the Director at the time Oswald was killed on Sunday, November 24, 1963. The Director replied that he was at home. He stated that the Dallas Office contacted him immediately following this event. Manchester inquired as to the Director's immediate reaction. The Director replied that his first thought was how such an event could take place, particularly under a system of civilized justice. The Director added that he had ordered an immediate check on Jack Ruby and particularly to ascertain if there had been a relationship between Ruby and Oswald.

Manchester inquired as to whether the Director was watching television at the time of Oswald's murder. The Director replied in the negative. He stated he was working on official papers at the time. The Director added that he usually saved Sundays to review lengthy documents and memoranda as well as to prepare himself for interviews, hearings, etc.

Manchester inquired as to what the Director was doing on Friday morning, November 22, 1963, prior to the assassination. The Director replied that he was conducting business as usual, that he had had a number of interviews that particular morning.

Manchester inquired as to the physical location of the wire service ticker machine. He was told that it is located across the hall and that pertinent wire service items are brought in to the Director immediately.

The Director told Manchester that his first conversation on November 22, 1963, with our Dallas Office occurred at approximately 1:48 p.m. The Director was advised at that time that the President was not believed to be dead yet but that he had suffered a mortal wound. The Director mentioned that on the occasion of his second call to the Attorney General, the Attorney General had indicated that he had also been in touch with a number of the Presidential Staff and had been informed of a number of details concerning the shooting and the fact that the President had died.

Manchester inquired as to the Director's opinion of the Attorney General's reaction upon being informed that the President had been shot. The Director replied that the Attorney General had been silent for a few moments and had then requested that the Director keep him informed of any further facts received concerning this matter. The Director told Manchester that the Attorney General is usually very quiet in manner until he has all the necessary facts of a given situation. The Director stated that the Attorney General was not the explosive type unless he became angry.

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Manchester told the Director that the President's call to the Director at 7:25 p.m., November 22, 1963, appeared to be one of the first calls that the President made upon returning to Washington that evening. The Director replied that he would surmise that this was correct. The Director added that our investigation proceeded forthwith; however, it was not until Monday or Tuesday of the following week that the President decided to name a Presidential Commission to look into the assassination. The Director told Manchester that an FBI report had been sent to the Warren Commission within ten days after the President had set up this body. The Director stated that he personally had appeared before the Warren Commission and that he considered their questioning of him to be quite thorough. He stated that thoroughness was necessary on the part of the Commission inasmuch as this would serve to assist in quelling gossip and speculation in the future. The Director quickly added, however, that rumors will continue concerning this case, especially in Europe where there is widespread gossip concerning a supposed conspiracy, for many years.

The Director told Manchester that the statement that some of the information may be withheld by the Warren Commission naturally gave rise to further rumor. Manchester replied that he could understand the Chief Justice's statement in this regard inasmuch as not just any individual should be allowed to look at the classified material sent to the Commission by some agencies. The Director replied that the issue in point is such that excessive precautions of security is unwise. The Director explained that he had never been a great believer in wasteful precautions or going overboard regarding excessive security. He stated that an item is either classified or else it isn't classified. The Director gave examples of leaks in Government that have given several Presidents extreme cause and worry. He stated that the FBI is usually called upon to investigate these leaks, however, newspapermen naturally do not desire to reveal their sources. The Director stated that if newspapermen did reveal such sources that quite naturally the sources would dry up.

Manchester inquired of the Director as to whether the assassination case became one of major concern following the President's call at 7:25 p.m., November 22, 1963. The Director stated that as he had previously indicated, the FBI had already entered this case. He added, however, that after the President's call we went all out in doing such things as working around the clock, sending a Washington-based FBI official to Dallas and adding approximately 30 Agents to the Dallas personnel complement. The Director stated that we still have at least 50 men who are tied up in running down leads on this particular case throughout the FBI's service. He stated that this case will never be closed from an investigative point of view inasmuch as we will continually receive leads, many from mental cases, which necessarily have to be checked out.

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Manchester asked if the matter of a President being assassinated not being a Federal crime had ever been discussed fully by the Congress, or anyone else, according to the Director's knowledge. The Director replied that there had been no discussion to any extent. He stated the matter had just never been considered.

Manchester inquired as to whether the FBI had prior material on Oswald before the assassination. The Director replied that we did have some information regarding Oswald, however, it was quite flimsy in nature. The Director then explained at some length the background of Oswald. He told Manchester of the press releases that Oswald made in Moscow. He told Manchester of Oswald's employment in a factory in Minsk, Russia, and of the fact that Oswald had later returned to Moscow. The Director stated that he certainly did not understand why the Department of State had failed to have Oswald sign an affidavit forfeitting his American citizenship at the time Oswald returned to Moscow and visited the U. S. Embassy. Manchester spoke up and stated that the State Department claimed they had wanted to find out if Oswald had committed an extraditable crime in the Soviet Union, therefore, no signed affidavit was taken from him. The Director again deplored the failure to have such an affidavit executed.

The Director continued that we had interviewed Oswald within two or three days following his arrival in the United States. He explained that we, of course, desired to find out if Oswald had been recruited as an intelligence agent by the Soviet Union. The Director told Manchester that this did not appear to be true. He added that Oswald had classified himself as a Marxist rather than a communist. The Director added that Oswald had later been interviewed in New Orleans after getting into a street squabble with anti-Castroites over leaflets being handed out by Oswald. The Director told Manchester that Oswald could best be termed a "loner." He explained Oswald's communications with the Communist Party in the United States but added that Oswald had never joined the Party. The Director told of the incidents surrounding Oswald's attempt to kill General Walker in Dallas. He added that Oswald's wife, Marina, had advised us of this incident following the assassination. The Director summarized this part of the interview by indicating there appeared to be nothing in Oswald's background which would reflect that he was a man of violence and most certainly nothing which indicated that Oswald had any intentions of assassinating the President.

Manchester asked if the Director did not find it odd that Mrs. Oswald had failed to tell anyone about the attempted assassination of General Walker until after the murder of President Kennedy. The Director replied that he did not find this odd in view of the cold relationship between Oswald and his wife, the language barrier on the part of Mrs. Oswald and the fact that Mrs. Oswald did not have the natural instincts of an American woman but to the contrary had a different attitude altogether. He stated he placed no significance in Mrs. Oswald's failure to advise of this incident prior to the assassination.

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The Director told Manchester that it was extremely difficult to speculate the motivations of Oswald to kill the President. The Director stated it was entirely ssible Oswald may have wanted to kill Governor John Connally. He explained that swald had written communications to Governor Connally protesting his particular type discharge from the U. S. Marine Corps. The Director added that President Kennedy as an intellectual liberal type. He stated that President Kennedy had been desirous of eping peace with honor. He stated that President Kennedy desired peaceful co-existenc American style. The Director added that the President, although he had been firm his dealings with Khrushchev, had a fairly good relationship with Khrushchev and the viet Union. The Director summed up by stating that Oswald could not have desired to ll the President because the President had dealt harshly, or spoken harshly, against e Communist Party and Chairman Khrushchev.

Manchester speculated that perhaps the communists, including Oswald, d not like the relationship between the late President and Khrushchev; therefore, the mmunists desired to do away with President Kennedy so that this obstacle to their sired philosophy could be removed. The Director replied that this was entirely ssible; however, he wanted Manchester to clearly understand that Khrushchev was not person to be trusted and that Chairman Khrushchev had a very cold and evil mind. he Director, at this point, gave examples of Khrushchev's understanding of the English nguage despite the fact that he had Troyanovsky, an excellent interpreter, with him all times while on his visits to the United States. The Director told Manchester that had always felt it better to kick individuals like Khrushchev on the shins once in a ile rather than to boot-lick them. The Director explained that Khrushchev was sically an oriental and that individuals opposing orientals usually lost face in the iental's opinion when fear or trepidation was shown.

Manchester inquired as to whether the Director's duties and sponsibilities allowed him to participate personally in the funeral ceremonies. The rector replied in the negative. He stated he had been at his desk constantly. He ded that he had issued instructions that FBI personnel participate officially in the remonies by assisting Secret Service as much as possible. The Director spoke of the ny visiting foreign dignitaries and of the dangers involved in the march from the ite House to St. Matthew's Cathedral. He told Manchester that over 40 Special ents had been assigned to assist Secret Service, particularly at St. Matthew's thedral. He further told Manchester that the authority to protect the President was arly a function of the Secret Service; however, since the assassination we have sisted when called upon. The Director briefly advised Manchester at this point of the mediate widespread ramifications of this case following the actual shooting. He told nchester that leads had spread to Mexico as well as throughout the entire United States. erefore, it has been necessary for him personally to remain at his desk so as to pervise this matter.

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At this point I reminded Manchester of his previous statement to me that e had to be at the White House at 11:15 a.m. Manchester thanked the Director twice pon his departure and stated that he was very appreciative of the Director's cooperation nd considerable time taken from a busy schedule to be of assistance.

CTION:

The Director may desire to send the Attorney General the attached letter ndicating that he had seen Manchester.